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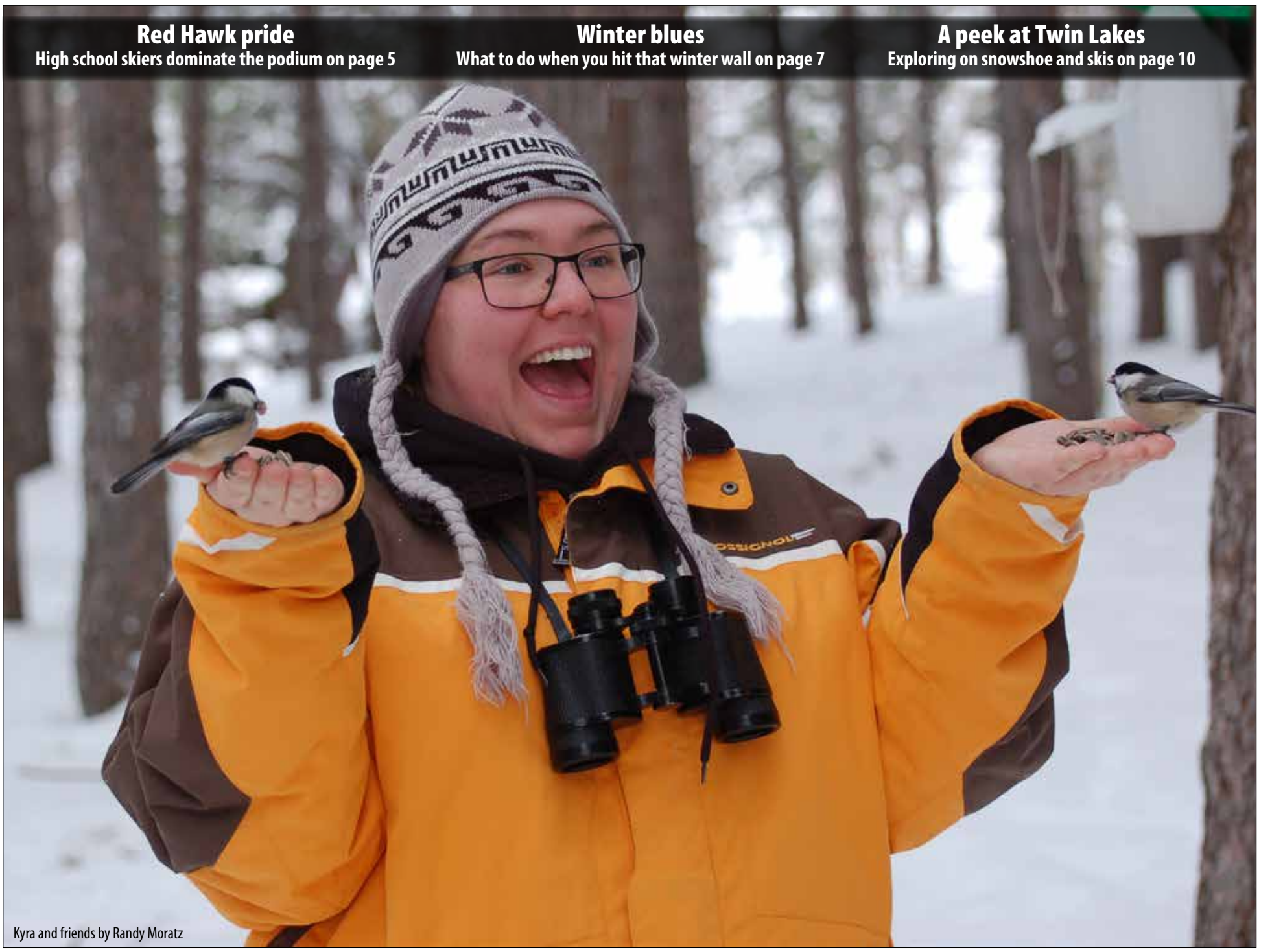
Red Hawk pride
High school skiers dominate the podium on page 5

Winter blues
What to do when you hit that winter wall on page 7

A peek at Twin Lakes
Exploring on snowshoe and skis on page 10



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ELOISE: *Empathy*

PLEASE CALL me Elo. I love my nickname. And I'm finally in Grade 5! I've always heard it's the best grade in school. It's amazing so far! I've already made friends with a Grade Six girl called Cecilia. She's tall like me, and seems really nice. I spotted her watching recess tetherball, so I waved her over to be my competition for one turn. Having the same height is sometimes better in this game, but not *necessarily*. I'd never seen her before, and we matched great. Now we wait together for the bus ride home.

I live with my grandmother. Mum still works in the city, but she's hoping for a vet tech job up here, and our very own house. Dad lives in Scotland. I only get to see him once a year, but I love those two weeks every August. He stays with Nan and me. He loves camping, but not in Algonquin Park. It's busy there in summer, so we camp instead on Nanny's property. I still get to go to the Park after all the leaf colours and tour buses are gone. November is my favourite month for Algonquin anyway. It's easier to spot a moose, eagle, marten, or wolf. Somebody once wrote on the special Visitor Centre animal-sighting chart that they'd seen a cougar!

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

I like living with Nanny. Her accent is nice. She misses her son, so we're both in touch with Dad, mostly by email. I phone my Mum in Mississauga practically every night. She asks about my homework, any new friends, my teacher. I wonder what the *T* stands for in Miss *T*. Fields. So Mum and I have fun trying to guess. *Terry? Tina? Tammy?*

Mum asks me on Nan's cellphone about me inviting Cecilia to play at recess.

Does she have a nickname?

I don't really know, I answer. *But I think I once heard her little sister call her 'Cee' at the bus stop.*

That's *exquisite*, I tell myself. It's also *exquisite* to have a brand new friend. Maybe we'll be besties.

Nanny is glad I have another playmate who lives close enough for bikes to reach in under ten minutes. She calls it *serendipity*. She aims to teach me a new word every so often. She loves when I use it again in a sentence. So far, I can memorize most words, and make pretty good sentences. Like:

It's 'serendipity' to have nice weather for backyard camping.

My cousin and I bought a thrift store four-person pop-up tent this past spring. We're allowed to try it out as long as Nanny sleeps right nearby in her studio. It's *precautionary*, she says. She wants me to have an *organic* childhood. I'm not quite sure what that means. I only know about *organic* chocolate.

When I first mentioned Cecilia, Nan used the word *empathy*. I used it right back because I know how it feels to be new at plenty of schools:

It feels 'exquisite' to use 'empathy'.

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Walking in style

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

I AM not a fan of winter these days. It's not because I dislike ice fishing or snowshoeing. I love both activities.

No, the only reason I dislike winter is because of what it has done to my hunting dog. You see, winter turns my rough and tumble bird flushing machine into a prima donna.

Though it pains me to admit it, in winter Rosie loves wearing bespoke sweaters and little leather boots.

I blame Jenn.

You see a few winters ago, Jenn took pity on her during an excessively cold stretch, so she knit Rosie a form-fitting sweater – and then bought her a pair of fashionable leather boots. As a result, I now have a hunting dog who prefers to dress up before stepping out for a stroll in winter.

I'm pretty sure that includes hair and make up.

Worse still, before a walk she'll throw me a look that says, "You're wearing that? Really?"

As you can imagine, this causes a fair bit of embarrassment. And not just for Rosie either.

If I happen to run into other outdoors enthusiasts, especially if the conversation turns to bird hunting, I feel like they immediately discount my claims of Rosie's extraordinary bird hunting abilities, based strictly on her appearance.

You can't blame them.

They'll look at Rosie, who will then strike a pose and turn to ensure we get her good side. She'll then tilt her head so that out of the wind blows gently through her long hair, and turn her smouldering eyes towards that person and pout to create a look that is pretty close to Derek Zoolander's Blue Steel.

That's when they will ask, "Where's your hunting dog?"

It's at this point, I'll say something like, "How about those Leafs, huh?"

But I'm not fooling anyone.

Look, I'm not saying that a dog can't be fashion-conscious and good at hunting. Rosie is both. But people expect a hunting dog to look a little more rugged and worn around the edges. They expect a dog like Rosie to be tough enough to weather the elements – which she will gladly do so long as we don't forget her lip balm.

Frankly, it's getting out of hand.

Yesterday, in the living room, she walked up to the arm of our couch, where a blanket hung towards the floor. She then slipped under it until her head emerged. We believe this was her way of letting Jenn know that we wouldn't mind a shawl as part of her upcoming early spring line up.

The good news is that her love of fashion seems to be confined to winter thus far. OK, and maybe the upcoming early spring collection.

The point is, by April she will likely be the hunting dog I know and love. One that will flush robins and roll in mud, retrieve training dummies, run through the spring woods, and find every burr and twig she can carry in her ears. In the evening, I'll spend hours brushing her coat out and wondering if her white patches will ever be clean again. And the sweaters and boots will be put away for another winter.

Between us, I can hardly wait for those days to arrive.

This winter is not close to being done with us yet, however. Hopefully, it doesn't get any worse.

There's nothing stranger than a dog who wants to stroll down the cat walk.

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Old-time square dance coming to Haliburton

ADAM FRISK
County Life Staff

Looking to shake off the winter blues? Dance Happens Here Haliburton (DH3) is inviting the community to trade their snow boots for dancing shoes.

DH3 is hosting an evening of some good old-fashioned square dancing and live bluegrass music at the Haliburton Legion next month.

Playing off the success of last summer's street dance at the River Cone in Minden, organizers came up with the idea of bringing that same high-energy, inclusive fun indoors during the winter season.

"We were talking about the old-fashioned square dance with a caller, where someone leads you through the steps," said DH3 committee member Myra Stephen in a telephone interview last week. "You don't have to have a partner; they talk you through it, and everybody can participate."

To ensure the night is authentic, DH3 has hired Hannah Shira Naiman, a professional caller and folk musician who recently moved to the Huntsville area, Stephen explained. Born in Toronto, Naiman comes from a long line of folk musicians and dancers, specializing in American old-time square dances, and has called for dances across eastern Ontario, Quebec, and the United States.

Naiman will be accompanied by three members of the acclaimed Toronto bluegrass band, The Barrel Boys.

Stephen said the event is supported by the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund, which helps DH3 bring unique dance experiences to the county.

"We try to do different things and bring different dance experiences to the county," she said. "We want people to have a chance to experience things they might not otherwise experience, and then if they get a taste of it, hopefully they'll have an opportunity to keep going in other ways."

The evening will also feature a performance by the Haliburton Scottish Country Dancers following an intermission.

"We didn't want to start with a performance because we don't want people to feel intimidated," Stephen explained. "What Hannah will lead us through, anybody can do. But having the Scottish Country Dancers perform shows what's possible with practice and gives people a chance to see another local group they might want to join."

Tickets for the Feb. 7 event are $20 for adults, $10 for college students, and free for children and high school students.

"We really want this to be a family event," Stephen noted. "That's why it's free for kids. You don't need a partner, you don't need special clothes, and you don't need experience."

The only requirement for the event is a pair of clean, indoor shoes to keep the dance floor dry and safe.

Tickets are available online at the Dance Happens Here Haliburton website and at Redmans Records.

Live in the moment

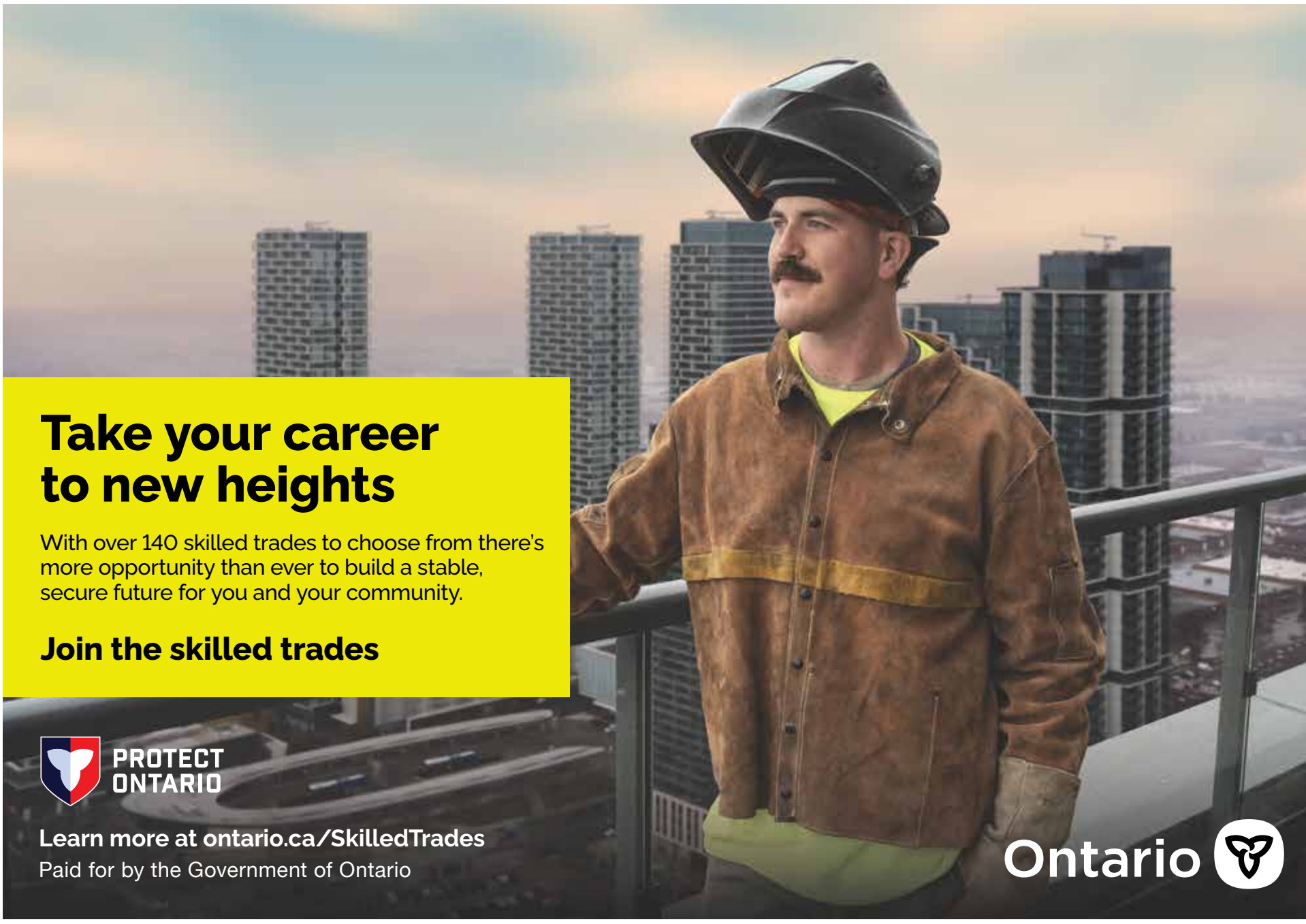
TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

THIS WEEK I saw an old friend who told the other people that he was sitting with that- "Teresa and I go back 100 years." So, I thought about how far we actually do go back, and it's more like 21. But I would say that we often use these kinds of exaggeration to make a bigger impact.

I know I say things like – I have heard this a million times, or I know I am 100 years old, but … However, let's think for a minute about 100 years ago: 1926, so much was different. The first world war and Spanish Flu had just finished changing society a great deal. There were more cars than carriages in the streets, but there were still both. Women were still for the majority relegated to the domestic roles of housewives and service. People were just settling huge swathes of this country and trying to clear forests and build homes out of the raw material around in lots of parts.

In the context of history 100 years is a blink, in the context of family 100 years is up to four generations. In the context of almost everything it is called antique or vintage. 100 years from now, what do you think we will see? In the year 2126? What will be remembered of our time here now? Family history will call us daughters, fathers, nephews and grandparents.

Some of us might be remembered for volunteer roles or impacts that we had on different projects. For the most part the world will just continue. Just another reminder to live in the moment, do all we can now, 100 will go by and we will be just a memory, lets embrace all that is right now. In 100 years it's only the things that we create now that might last.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Group shot at Peterborough Invitational January 8. /photos by Karen Gervais

Red Hawk skiers continue to dominate the podium

KAREN GERVAIS
County Life Contributor

HHSS skiers competed in Peterborough and at the Kawartha Nordic Invite on Jan. 8 and 14 respectively. Both days were mild and Red Hawk skiers had to respond to icy and slushy conditions. The meets included skiers from Peterborough schools St. Peter's, Adam Scott, Thomas A. Stewart as well as Lakefield College School.

In the Junior Girls 5-kilometre race, Annika Gervais continued to lay claim to the third-place position on the podium, followed by teammates Anika Suke in fourth and Kailey Hoare in fifth and sixth at each meet. Novice Girls Leah Allder and Quinn Hamilton stepped up their game to make the leap to the Junior 5-kilometre distance after each taking a turn winning the Novice division.

The Red Hawk Junior Boys team continues to fly high, with Tristan Humphries continuing his winning streak and teammates Kip Kelly, Alex Lee and Duncan Evans-Fockler capturing the remaining top 5 positions. At Kawartha Nordic, HHSS junior boys owned the podium with Humphries in first, Kelly in second, and Lee in third. This team has been untouchable by other schools thus far in the Sprint Relays. Junior Boy Aren Addison also made the leap to the 5-kilometre distance as a Novice skier and continues to move up the Junior Boys ranks.

Senior Girl Violet Humphries has also had an undefeated season so far. Supporting on the podium has been Ella Gervais with two third-place finishes this season and Grace Allder in fourth at Kawartha Nordic and Olivia Gruppe third in Peterborough. Ruby Morrison also showed her strength making the jump from the Novice division to complete her first 7-kilometre senior course at Kawartha Nordic.

Senior Boy Evan Backus posted some fast times to place second at Kawartha Nordic and win the Peterborough race. Teammates Graham Backus, Winston Ramsdale, Owen Megrah-Poppe also achieved top five honours.

The skiers will break from competition for exams and look to return to racing at the Orillia Invitational on Feb. 4 for a preview of the OFSAA courses at Hardwood Hills. They will then return to race in Haliburton where we will host COSSA competition at Glebe on Feb. 11.

The skiers would like to express their gratitude to the grooming team at Glebe for keeping the trails in top condition for practice and all the community volunteers that came to support hosting the Haliburton Nordic Invitational on Dec. 16.

Junior Boys podium sweep at Kawartha Nordic Invite.

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Art

I RECENTLY wrote an article about a band by the name of Union Duke, who are scheduled to rock the Haliburton Legion the last weekend of January.

When I have conversations with bands or musicians, the questions are generally fairly status-quo. What was their inspiration, how long have they played music together, who are their favourite musical idols?

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

It's always interesting, but usually pretty basic.

But when I spoke with the drummer of Union Duke, I came up with a new question, in light of the ease around our conversation.

I asked him how he used his music in this politically charged environment. Was music something he saw as an opportunity to share messaging and kindness? Or did he prefer to stray away from politics, in the hopes that a night out would offer our struggling psyches a chance to shut off for a few short hours.

He answered that it was a bit of both. "It's nearly impossible to be apolitical these days," he said.

That got me thinking a bit. What is the purpose of the arts? Yes, they can make us laugh, they can make us cry. There are performances that can captivate, artwork that can inspire.

And when I say 'the arts.' I am referring to any art form: dance, theatre, music, poetry, visual creation. The *Oxford Dictionary* definition of art is: "the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power."

So where does politics come into the picture? And where do we draw the line between using art as a medium to share our experiences, versus an outlet to escape reality?

It's a fine line, in my opinion. And I know I may be lonely in that belief. There are some that believe that anyone with a platform absolutely must use it to advocate for the oppressed, to further the agenda of progress, to define the difference between right and wrong.

I know others who believe that politics should have no place in art. It's an escape from reality: an opportunity to disconnect from the horrors of every day, and relish in the beauty of human creation and connection.

But back to that fine line. Nearly everything we create these days does come with a healthy dose of political undercharge, whether conscious or not. Art has been used as a medium for sharing stories since time immemorial. Even propagandistic sculptures and chauvinistic ancient architecture carries some semblance of devised messaging: a political statement that has smattered across centuries.

Just like the news, we have to be mindful of the art we consume. When pieces are created out of hate or derision, that seeps through. The music comes with a weight, the art comes with a price more impactful than any tag could hold.

Art is politics, but it is also a freedom of expression. An opportunity to learn about all sides of the coin, and a glimpse into the inner workings of what makes people tick.

It's beautiful, in every sense of the word.

So, here is to a world of art; its ability to allow us to disconnect while connecting, unlearn while learning, review while viewing, look ahead while looking back. No other form of expression allows for us to experience every end of the spectrum simultaneously.

So let's keep creating.

Top 10 Reasons not to invade Greenland

RIGHT NOW, the President of the US is seriously considering an illegal invasion of Greenland, despite protests from a host of nations and most Americans. I suspect no one has tried to speak reason to him regarding this.

So, in the interest of peace, here are the Top 10 reasons not to invade Greenland.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. Not as green as the name suggests.
2. The cold air is horrible for spray tans and cankles.
3. A lack of Nobel Peace Prizes to steal.
4. Polar bears on every golf course.
5. They have a real seal team.
6. Eventually, you're going to have to guess where it is on a map during a televised press conference.
7. No matter how many times you say it, no one is ever going to call it Orangeland.
8. It won't fill that horrible, gaping void in your soul.
9. Just because the island has lots of Fjords, doesn't mean you can get them to buy American cars.
10. It's not that kind of island.

Heart

Hand carved Heart swaying in the Wind, dangling from a string on the twig of a tree,
that springs from Snow along the side of the road, the frozen Lake sprawling beyond it,
beneath a blaze of blue Sky glazing Snow, I slow my steps, taking deep Breaths, inhaling the space that surrounds me,
pausing at the spindly tree to feel the wooden Heart that swings in the Wind,
wondering whether it was placed here by the hands that carved it,
last year's Heart that dangled from a tree branch on the trail, no longer there,
growing weathered and moldy as the months passed, 'till one day it vanished from the tree,
and I wondered whether the Heart dropped to the ground, hidden in a nest of tall grasses,
or somebody snatched it from its branch, the appearance of this new Heart on the twig of a tree, gladdening my own,
that sometimes skips beats when it feels alone or heavy as stone, or cramped in a space where there's not enough room to breathe,
my Heart's rhythm, steady and strong, as I stop at the tree to touch the wooden Heart,
wondering who hung it here, to adorn the bare tree, during these days of In-Between,
when the old year crawls towards its end, and the new one hasn't yet arrived,
the world enduring such turmoil and uncertainty, it's a wonder it survived,
my fingers feeling the smoothness of the wood, the contours of the lopsided Heart, grateful to the stranger who placed it here,
wondering whether their Heart ever feels frail and resilient at the same time, like mine,
pausing during these last days of the year to walk through Snow and around the frozen Lake,
passing others that are doing the same, alone with their thoughts or trying to slough them off,
wondering what the New Year will bring, this harbinger of a hand carved Heart, dangling from a string on the twig of a tree,
beneath a blaze of blue Sky glazing Snow, boot prints leading towards the Lake, that I follow,
as I stroke the wooden Heart, So Long, wishing it a long Life, dangling here on the twig of a tree,
that it weathers whatever storms are hurled its way, wishing the same for the world during these days of In-Between,
when I walk and breathe, slowing my steps and Breath to inhale the beauty of the space that surrounds me,
stepping onto the frozen Lake, canopied by the blue bowl of Sky, spilling its light onto ice and Snow,
wherever I go, my Heart accompanies me, its rhythm, steady and strong, and whenever it skips a beat or two
because it's grown hardened or weary, or trapped in a crowd and the world grows too loud,
I close my eyes and breathe, the memory of an empty Sky and frozen Lake expanding inside me,
flooding the spaces between heartbeats with peace.

Sylvie Kalenda

Writing on the Senior Side

Getting around inside Dodge

GAIL STELTER
County Life Contributor

I want out now. I'm done. It's the end of January, and that's more than enough for me. I want out of Dodge. Oh, how I miss spending winter months in the sunny south. I miss the years of winter escape from Dodge, which, as you may recall, is, by my definition, anywhere it's cold and snowy and windy and icy and slippery and dangerous to drive and hard climb over snowbanks and to deal with the piled high snow mountain entrance to the driveway.

The calendar, the maps and the climate say no way. They say you live in Haliburton. You can't get out until April, and even that is not a given. My mother would say, "It's Canada, what do you expect?" I am a Senior Side woman. I am strong. I am almost invincible. I will roar above the winter wind, and I will find a way to get out.

Of course, it would be nice to get on a plane and go to an island in the sun, but health issues keep me close to Canadian hospitals. Even without this concern, there is the realization that the happenings in the country next door are disturbing, often disgusting and even frightening. I will not go there, probably never again. To the two or three American friends and cousins I remain in contact with, I am so sad for you and all the good people of your country. I remain hopeful that good will prevail over evil, and I hope the hurt stops soon.

So what's my plan?

Since I am not going outside Canada, let's explore the warmest place in Canada in January: Victoria, British Columbia, which has the warmest temperatures and mildest weather. I recently read a news article in which Canadian snowbirds were interviewed about no longer going to Florida. One couple mentioned changing their travel plans to Vancouver. I hadn't considered this possibility, but I am now. I can see Peter and me in a lovely rental home overlooking the ocean for a month or six weeks. I haven't even mentioned this to Peter, and as you may not know, he is the first reader of these stories. I can hardly wait to hear what he says when he reads this. (I'll let you know and put it in at the end when I do my final edit before submitting it to the paper.) We can't go west this year. It's a little late for planning and also for "organizing" the necessary finances. I think Victoria is a great long-term plan, not the heat and outdoor swimming I would wish for, but a good substitute.

So, what's the plan for getting out of Dodge now?

There isn't one for getting out now, but I do have several ideas for getting around inside Dodge.

- Get out of the house once a month with a day trip, shopping and lunch, at a nearby larger community such as Bracebridge, Lindsay, Peterborough or Orillia. I even looked on the internet for restaurants that were on the TV show, *You Gotta Eat Here*. And, showing my age once again, Swiss Chalet is still good.
- Buy a new bathing suit. I hate buying swimsuits, but our swim spa/ hot tub is an escape, if you don't count having to wear a toque.
- Find the warmest place in Ontario. Apparently, it is Windsor, but I don't want to go there, so the Niagara Peninsula is the next best. We are going to good old Niagara Falls. I hear you laughing. I know we've been there before and will forever have memories of tacky Clifton Hill and cheap motels, but I need a place that should be warmer than here. I'm excited for this Senior Side adventure. We will still be staying at a lovely falls view hotel with a gorgeous pool, and I have booked tickets for the new event/experience called Flight Over Niagara. I also want to experience the Journey Behind the Falls, but I am not sure if it is open in winter. If it is open, I will have to figure out how cold it will be and how much walking is involved. I will need places to sit and rest and catch my breath. Life on the Senior Side has its own set of rules and conditions.
- Find a few different windows to my world. I am thinking of a trip to a theatre performance. Live theatre can be counted on to boost my winter immunity. I would also like to visit a beautiful church and an amazing library. I would like to attend a writers' festival or something similar. More planning is needed.
- Local fun stuff: live music, dinner out with friends and whatever comes to mind when you say, "it's a senior fun time".

Shout out here for those of you who, like me, are fans and spectators of winter sports. The Leafs play tonight, and the Seahawks have been great. I get so involved. I don't like to watch them lose, and of late, I have been yelling at the TV. I will try to stick to just clapping and cheering. Filling my headspace with my teams helps me get around inside Dodge, and the winter Olympics will be a bonus.

There are also other components to consider for getting around inside Dodge. When I am tired of the computer, not the writing, just the computer due to my poor eyesight, cataracts, and glaucoma, I will sometimes go to the store just to walk up and down the aisles. Not only do I not feel safe walking outside, but I also can't breathe in the cold: cold-induced asthma, one doctor called it. I read that the pool at Pinestone may reopen for community use. I would love that so much more than walking the aisles in the grocery store. Nevertheless, the large out-of-town stores and the mall in Peterborough are good for walking, and there are places for me to sit down and catch my breath. It is easy to think about these things, but you need to be a strong, purposeful man or woman to plan it and make it happen by choice, not happenstance. You need to plan. Get out, or click on your February calendar and decide when, where and how you are going to get around inside Dodge. And, while you are doing so, it is always good remember winter will end. It always does.

P.S. - Peter says British Columbia works for him. We are looking at Nanaimo.

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Email the basics to: classifieds@haliburtonpress.com.

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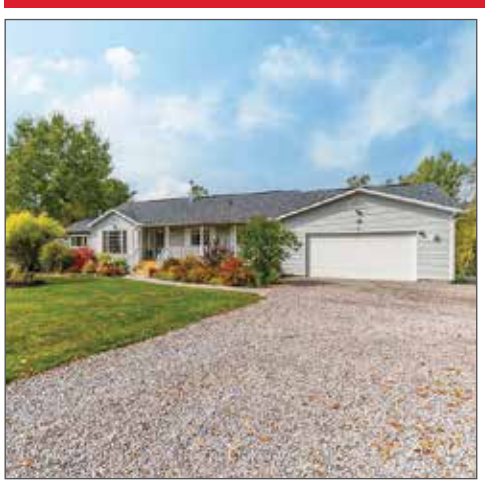

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- Minutes from Minden and Kinmount

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Naturally Yours

Twin Lakes

SLIPPING UNDER the radar for many snowshoers in Haliburton County are the free snowshoe trails on the Twin Lakes Resort property. Most noted as a cross-country ski destination, the snowshoe trail trailhead is in the same parking area used by Nordic skiers. Off Highway 35, nine kilometres north of Minden, turn on Taylor Rd and travel a short distance to Twelve Mile Lake Road. Turn right and the parking area is just past this intersection on your left.

RICK WHITTEKER
Naturally Yours

Marked by a map and starting just before the ski kiosk, the snowshoe trail heads uphill right away and into a nice mixed hardwood. Meandering to find the route of least resistance, the trail is easy to follow with flagging tape and some trail markers on the route.

It is obvious that wildlife also enjoy using this trail - logical considering the energy saved by travelling on a packed route, especially for deer. Deer move by what is called digitigrade locomotion, which is walking on their toes, giving them a springy step and increasing their capacity for speed. However, they are not well adapted to deep snow and will utilize any advantage they can get to save energy during the cold winter months.

Deer usually travel in small groups in the winter, walking single file on established pathways in their home range. These "game trails" are easily recognizable by their width and depth as only a larger animal could make these rutted troughs through the snow. Moose are significantly bigger and are more likely to travel solo in the winter. Wolves and coyotes travel in packs but their trails are usually shallower and not roughed up by deep hoof prints. There are plenty of wildlife trails and tracks on this snowshoe route.

The snowshoe trails are organized into two loops, the inside loop which is about three kilometres and the outside loop which is about one kilometer. In either case, the trails cross the ski trail and snowshoers are asked to try to avoid stepping directly on the ski track set while crossing.

On this mild winter day, each deep rut of deer hooves was filled with a sprinkling of springtails, tiny specks of

see page 11

The snowshoe trails are organized into two loops. /photo by Rick Whitteker

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4 p.m.

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Our Gifts from the Heart campaign has come to a close and our message is simple:

Thank you!

Every gift, share and kind word mattered. Because of you, ***Community Kitchen*** continues to provide nutritious meals, create connection and remind people they are seen and valued.

We are so grateful for this community and the ripple effect you create — one meal at a time.

SIRCH community services
sirch.on.ca

Naturally Yours

Snow fleas gather in a deer hoof print in the snow. /photo by Rick Whitteker

Twin Lakes trails offer great cross country skiing. /photo by Thom Lambert

from page 10

black looking like someone has ground some pepper in each hoof print. Also called snow fleas - they are not fleas - nor are they insects but snow fleas are classified as arthropods. These tiny, wingless, ground dwelling critters live in the leaf litter and play an important role in soil health and decomposition.

Sheltered in the subnivean zone in the winter, they get their name from a tail-like appendage called a furcula which allows them to jump long distances. A small latch under their abdomen holds the furcula in place and it is released when they feel threatened or want to move to a new location. These tiny specks can leap several centimeters out of harms way, hence the name "springtail". Known to appear on mild winter days, they move about at temperatures above minus two degrees Celsius to find new feeding locations.

The ski and snowshoe trails at Twin Lakes could only happen with the permission of the Twin Lakes resort through a land use agreement. The buzz around Twin Lakes skiing this year is about the expansion of the trails. Graciously allowing the Highlands Nordic Trail & Ski Club Association to use the trail on his land, local landowner Ben Graham has also entered a similar agreement with the ski club to make this happen. The new trails are fabulous, rolling through mature forests and adjacent to open wetlands.

There is not only excitement about the snowshoeing and skiing opportunities at Twin Lakes but there are also significant developments at the resort itself. For more information on this I reached out to Craig Titus, general manager at Twin Lakes Resort. Craig let me know that the lakeside cabins are being renovated as well as the hotel building and restaurant. Other plans include some off-the-grid trailside cabins and a large wedding/concert venue. A year around destination is the plan at Twin Lakes Resort, with the ski trails being available for hiking in the warmer months.

Making my way back to the parking lot after completing the inside snowshoe loop, Twin Lakes has a lot to offer, both outside and in, now and in the near future.

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m.
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: Closed
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m.
Supper specials every Friday starting at 5 p.m. May purchase special and eat in club room downstairs.
Clubroom opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5:30 p.m.
Special events:
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
3rd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary Meeting (members only)
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices. Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Special Events Only, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 7 p.m.
Mondays: Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Tuesdays: Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Jan. 28 Darts $5/player 2 p.m.
Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10.
5 to 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 28 Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m. – No need to pre-register
Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25
Darts $5/player 2 p.m.
Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Open Cribbage 6:30 – No need to pre-register
Thursdays: Feb. 12, 26 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
Fridays: Jan. 30 Fish and Chips 1pc/$15, 2pc/$20.
5 to 8 p.m.
Saturdays: Jan. 31 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Jan. 31 Nacho Average Trivia 7 p.m. $5/Player
Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Feb. 14 Ken McFarlane Memorial Family Day Lake Trout Ice Fishing Derby. Weigh in 3pm. Register at the Legion before closing on Feb 13
14 Valentine's Day Dance 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
28 Nacho Average Trivia 7pm. $5/Player
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-222

Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Barred Owl by Randy Moratz

A male hairy woodpecker enjoys some suet by Vivien Mausz

Blue Jay in thought by Tammy Nash

Deer having a snack by Debi Ireland Gray squirrel by Jill Moulton

Deer having a snack by Debi Ireland

Gray owl by Tammy Nash

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Wanted: scrap cars and trucks. Cash paid. Please call **705-286-3758** or **cell 249-332-1212**

COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT

Meeting Space for Rent: Blue Sky Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright open space downtown with private entrance and washroom. Available for rent by the hour, half or full day. Contact: **705-457-3500** info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

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Spacious one bedroom, one bath lower apartment located in the heart of Minden. The apartment provides a perfect blend of town and country living. Features include front door access, open concept living, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces, internet and preferential parking spots. $1,875 All inclusive plus shared hydro. Please Contact: **647-394-4899.** Photos available upon request.

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Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Teen Movie Matinee
When: Thursday, Jan. 29 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Dysart Library (Haliburton Village)
Take a break and chill with friends. Drop in for a screening of a popular teen-friendly film – perfect for unwinding after exams or studying. No registration required!
Forest-Themed Crafts/Activities
When: Friday, January 30 During Regular Branch Hours
Where: Wilberforce, Minden Hills, Dysart (Haliburton Village), Stanhope or Dorset Library
Drop in for free forest-themed crafts and activities and pick up your Forest of Reading tracker to begin your reading adventure! This Canadian program celebrates home-grown authors, illustrators, and publishers, with exciting categories for all ages.

PA Day Movie
When: Friday, January 30 at 1pm
Where: Minden Hills or Dysart (Haliburton Village) Library
Spend your PA Day with a movie the whole family can enjoy! We're screening Iron Will—the story of a young man who enters a dogsled race to save his family's farm. Free to attend—no registration required! Movie is rated PG.

SALC Needle Felting Winter Landscapes
When: Friday, January 30 from 1-2pm
Where: Dorset Library
In this free, hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to needle-felt a winter landscape. All materials provided. Offered in partnership with the Government of Ontario, supporting social connection, creativity, and well-being among older adults in our community. Registration required. Call 705-457-2241 or email programs@haliburtonlibrary.ca to register.

Old Time Winter Folk Dance
When: Saturday, February 7, 2026 7:00-10:00pm
Where: Haliburton Legion
Dance Happens Here (DH3) presents an Old Time Winter Square Dance in partnership with Hike Haliburton, Winter Edition featuring square dance caller Hannah Shira Naiman, live bluegrass musicians from the Barrel Boys and a performance by the Haliburton Scottish Country Dancers. Join the fun with dances for all ages and abilities.

Horticultural Trivia Contest
When: February 7, 10:45am-2pm
Where: Minden Community Centre, 55 Parkside St. Minden
Please join the Minden & District Horticultural Society. Guest speakers Connie Walker and Carolyn Perks will hold a horticultural trivia contest. This is a free event, however please bring a dish to share and your own tableware, cup and cutlery.

Recurring events

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Duplicate Bridge - Please arrange for a partner.
When: Wednesdays at 12:45 at Park Lane Apartments.
Fridays at 12:45 at Haliburton Legion, Schofield Room.

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street

Lakeside Church Service
When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome here.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 and 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw at the Coboconk Legion. Five spins for $10. The first four rounds are for highest and lowest score with two winners per round. The last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library New Book Nook Hours
When: 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Minden Hills Branch, 176 Bobcaygeon Rd. Minden
Choose from a variety of gently read books: thrillers, mysteries, romance, biographies, children and youth selections, Canadian authors, fiction, science fiction/fantasy, sports, spiritual and other non-fiction books. Bring a reusable bag. Payment is by cash donation. All money raised supports library enhancements and programmes for all libraries in the county.

Wilberforce Visitor Information Centre
When: Thursday to Monday 10 a.m. 4 p.m. (Closed Tuesday and Wednesday)
Where: 2786 Essonville Line in Wilberforce, at the Curling Club
We offer mineral permission to collect forms, directions, geocaching information and GPS rentals, trails, events, and other general area information. Free Wi-Fi is also available.

Mineral Collecting
Mineral collecting is a fun outdoor activity. Adults and kids alike will delight in the chance to dig for buried treasure and bring home some colourful gems of your very own! Get a Permission to Collect form (free) from our website highlandseast.ca.

Geocaching
Geocaching is a family friendly outdoor game. It's often referred to as "treasure hunting with a high tech twist" because you use the geocaching.com website and either a GPS device or a smartphone. GPS Rentals are available from the Visitor Information Centre and come preloaded so you can start playing right away.

Trails
Whether you like to walk or run, ride a bike, horse or an ATV, one of Highlands East's trails is sure to please. Come enjoy the fall colours. Maps and descriptions can be found on our website highlandseast.ca.

Local Service Directory

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THE HALIBURTON COUNTY
ECHO
The Voice of the Highlands since 1884
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Healthcare projects get financial boost from governments

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

As everyone pins their hopes on a spring start to the construction of local healthcare facilities, the federal and provincial governments are making that optimism seem a little bit more like a healthy dose of realism.

On Wednesday, MP John O'Reilly and MPP Chris Hodgson announced that the local projects are approved for funding under the joint infrastructure program.

The federal and provincial governments will each pay one-third of the costs for a new 30-bed long-term care unit at Haliburton Hospital and an emergency wing and expanded accommodations at the Hyland Crest site, up to a certain dollar limit, of course.

When the application was made, the projects' projected costs were $13.7-million, and that's the figure approval was based on. This means the federal and provincial governments will each chip in $4.6-million, making for a total of $9.2-million in government funding. Local fundraising will have to pay for the rest, with the county agreeing to play an active role in insuring the money is available.

This is much better than the $6.4-million funding limit previously agreed to by the provincial government when the projects were first approved in 1994.

Of course, given that the province now has to pay $2-million less than it had to as the sole government funding source, this is welcome news for Queen's Park as well as Haliburton Highlands Health Services.

"The infrastructure funding

See FUNDING page 4

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LET'S DANCE: To the delight of hundreds of people in the audience, the Haliburton Figure Skating Club presented its annual skating carnival at the Dysart arena on Sunday afternoon. Here, Anna Schleifenbaum, Leanna Pearsell, Minna Schleifenbaum and Tamara Bain do the Mexican Hat Dance. More photos on page 21.

GETTING THE GOODS ON DOWNLOADING

MPP says Highlands spared from the worst

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

It could have been worse.

That was the main message MPP Chris Hodgson gave to local politicians who are worried about the economic impact of provincial downloading.

"Haliburton County was headed towards being grants negative," Hodgson told county council, plus 35 municipal representatives in the audience at Wednesday's county council meeting. In other words, if the province had cut its own deficit by cutting transfer payments to municipalities, in the same way the federal government solved its deficit problems by cutting payments to provinces, local municipalities would have been scrambling to cope with a loss of all provincial funding.

As it is now, Hodgson says the province made provisions to ensure that a projected $1.8-million loss of grants didn't materialize. Instead, local governments need to cut only $163,000 from their budgets in order to have funding stay at present levels. "That's a huge benefit."

It was very important for Hodgson to get the support of local politicians because the Tory government's Achilles heel when it comes to voter popularity is property taxes, which threaten to rise dramatically as a result of downloading.

"Politically we have put a lot of faith in municipal councils," Hodgson said. "We're putting our political future in your hands to keep costs down for taxpayers... Our intent is to have less government and less onerous taxes and there's no point in lowering income taxes if property taxes go up."

To a large part, Hodgson succeeded in getting local politicians on side; at the very least, there was no expressed hostility towards him or his government and the meeting ended on a cordial note. He used humour to break the ice and appeared serious in his intent to help local governments solve many of the problems downloading and the province-wide shift to Actual Value Assessment will create.

Speaking without notes or pauses for about half an hour,

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Education funding squabbles begin early

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

Queen's Park has had complete control of education's purse strings for less than a month and already it and the area's new school board are questioning each other's math.

Depending on whose figures you look at, the district school board for Haliburton County, Muskoka and Victoria County is either in for a relatively small but welcome increase in funding for the remainder of the school year or a relatively small but still significant decrease.

The province says it's giving the amalgamated board $1.5-million more than it was told it would receive from January 1 to August 31 — the so-called "stub year" prior to when the government's new funding model is to take effect.

But the school board maintains the $85.8-million in funding it's getting for the eight months is actually a decrease of about $582,000. And the board's take on the funding situation doesn't sit well with riding MPP and management board chair Chris Hodgson.

"They're wrong," he told the *Echo* Friday morning. "I don't know why they're playing games with this ... They got an increase."

But Al Ingram, the board's superintendent of finance, defends the board's accounting.

He said the discrepancy can

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